EASTERCON 22

PROGRESS REPORT 2

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST CONVENTION ?

By Peter Weston, Convention Chairman

AS MEMBERSHIP in the 1971 Eastercon went past the 150-mark a few weeks ago, your committee realised that we really do have a full-scale international convention on our hands. By all appearances so far this will certainly be Britain's biggest-yet national convention, and with seven months or so still to go we are somewhat nervously wondering just how big it will finally be!

But in any case I was tremendously pleased with this response, and felt it was high time we published another Progress Report to explain some of the many arrangements we have now made. Not only would we like to see this the biggest but also the best British convention to date, although of course that will remain to be seen.

As you'll remember, our earlier promise was that the 1971 Eastercon would return to an emphasis on science fiction itself (a fairly obvious move, one feels), and would also spend some time on science fiction fandom. If you care to take a look at our proposals for programme events, overpage, I think you'll see that we have been fairly successful in each case. A number of other events and speakers remain to be confirmed at the present time.

Another suggestion was that a special attempt be made to attract visitors from the United States and Europe, particularly some of the 'name' authors who we so rarely see in this country. So far we have heard that both Anne McCaffrey (DRAGONFLIGHT) and Harry Harrison will attend, with very likely Frederik Pohl, Keith Laumer and Robert Bloch as well. (Cont/d)..

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Nothing would please us more than to see other U.S. fans and professionals at Worcester, and we have been trying to arrange a reduced-rate party to fly over to England next Easter, as a sort of junior version of this year's Heidelberg charter flight. The thinking was that some people might like to combine the convention with a European holiday or business trip - authors, after all, should be able to make some claim against tax for the cost of the flight.

Alan E. Nourse, owner of Tradewinds Travel Bureau is at present looking into the various possibilities in the hope of making an announcement in our next bulletin. In the meantime can we ask anyone who might be interested in joining a party for the flight to contact Mr Nourse at Tradewinds, P.O. Box 396, Fall City, Washington 98024.

Besides these special guests from America we hope that most leading science fiction personalities from this country and Europe will be present. A number of the German and Swedish 'regulars' have already registered, and we have invited Jannick Storm (Denmark), Jon Bing (Norway) and John-Henri Holmberg (Sweden), with each of whom some of you may have previously been in contact.

An invitation has also been sent to a rather unusual destination, to Julius Kagarlitski in Moscow, a friend of Guest-of-Honour Brian Aldiss who is Russian translator and editor of H.G. Wells and an excellent speaker. We have no idea the the moment whether or not Mr Kagarlitski will actually be able to attend, but there is at least a chance that he may be able to get some kind of cultural grant in order to come over and take part in our programme.

Our own English professionals should be out in force at Worcester, and for the benefit of newcomers these include Brian Aldiss himself, John Brunner, Ted Tubb, Michael Moorcock, Kenneth Bulmer, Chris Priest, James White, Bob Shaw, Dan Morgan and others - have I missed anyone? Not forgetting our 'adopted' author James Blish, and maybe some other writers who are less-frequent visitors to conventions. We shall have to wait and see who will respond to our invitations.

PROGRAMME EVENTS

We are deliberately planning a busy programme of events for the convention weekend. Not only is this the principal 'shop-window' on British science fiction fandom, but we want to avoid those gaping voids which have sometimes been known to open up in the middle of Eastercons and in which everyone sits around irritably waiting for something to happen. As Bob Rickard said at a committee meeting, in his opinion a good convention "is one you leave feeling you haven't had time to see everything that was going on".

Those who might prefer a more leisurely time will find our system of strategically-planned breaks and a comfortable bar and lounge should remove any fears of exhaustion! For the rest, I hope you will find our final choice of events to be interesting and perhaps exciting. Very little is heard about SF during the rest of the year, and it is only at conventions that most people have opportunity to meet the authors and hear what is happening within science fiction. Our only problem is fitting all of these programme ideas into the short space of (effectively) two days.

Beginning with Brian Aldiss' Guest of Honour speech (which incidentally will not be held during the Banquet) our programme will include a 'dialogue' on SF between Harry Harrison and Donald Wollheim; a discussion panel on fandom chaired by Ethel Lindsay with participants of her choice; John Brunner's session of useful advice to would-be writers, under the title "How to Write SF" and the Philip Strick review spot.

(Cont/d)..

There will be a lot more flesh on this skeleton, including at least one more major speech on science fiction, further discussions, and as we see it at the moment a forum of top authors and critics talking about some of the major SF works of the past few years. On a lighter note, Ken Bulmer's popular "Quick Quiz" from the Oxford convention will run throughout the weekend in between longer programme items.

Obviously our final programme will include where possible whatever guests from overseas are able to join us, and a number of items are even now awaiting confirmation.

On the visual side of things we have Philip Strick again, the genial Head of Film Distribution at the British Film Institute, who will introduce and talk around a selection of excerpts from noteworthy films (some more-or-less unknown to general audiences). This event in particular went down very well at the recent Birmingham Speculation conference and we have asked Philip to show again that Hungarian film which was so well received.

There will be two colour films from NASA (Apollo Project and Moon Landing types of thing) to rejuvenate that 'sense of wonder'; most probably a slide-show on 'Star Trek'; and for an amusing touch some of the excellent 'home movies' from the Manchester group and a number of incriminating slides taken at previous conventions.

We have already ordered most of our requirements for full-length SF and fantasy films, thanks to the good services of Gerald Bishop, and have tried here to present a selection for everybody, from avante garde and good modern films to real old thundering space opera. Not Metropolis, however, although to compensate we shall have all the benefits of Cinemascope and glorious Technicolour!

SPECIAL EVENTS

Various special events will be arranged during the evenings. On Friday we currently plan to include a dramatic performance of science fiction plays staged by the St. John's Players, Worcester's amateur dramatics society, and adapted from the stories of a well-known British author.

On Saturday there will be the St. Fanthony ceremony (barring obstacles); the Fashion Parade of the Future, and the Fancy Dress Ball. The first of these is a uniquely-British institution that must be seen to be remembered; the second is unashamedly copied from U.S. conventions; and the last is usually a shambles!

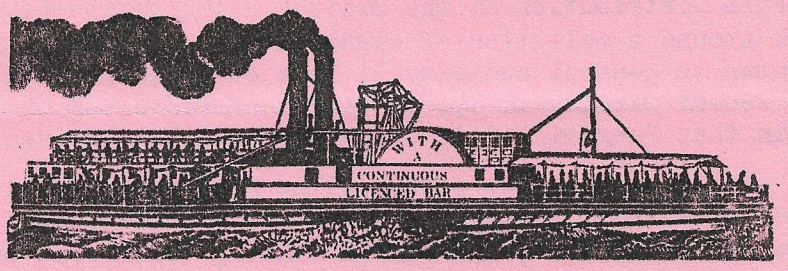
But this time we really do intend the Fancy Dress Ball to be organised properly, with everyone in costume (even if we have to distribute paper hats as in 1969!) and genuine prizes for those who have worked hard on their costumes. Do start thinking about a costume now, because the evening can be a lot of fun. We are also wondering in an uncommitted sort of way whether this 'Ball' should actually be a Ball, with music of some sort for dancing. This has been suggested by one or two people, and we should like to ask your opinions here — is it a good idea, do you think?

Similarly, we want to make the Fashion Parade a first-class event, and we hope it will be seized upon with cries of joy by the girls as an excuse to dress up in the most outlandish fashions. Doreen Parker has kindly offered to advise, coordinate and generally bully entrants, and will be delighted to hear from any of our ladies who might want to take part. (Write to Doreen Parker at 17 Wells Street, Scunthorpe, Lincs.)

(Cont/d)..

Finally, Sunday evening will see the Banquet, really the closing ceremony of the convention, in which it is hoped our G.o.H. and accompanying Toastmaster and one or two other speakers will wax eloquent and entertainingly over a good meal from the kitchens of the Giffard. The Banquet will see the presentation of the BSFA Award, the Doc Weir and Ken McIntyre Awards, and anything else which can be appropriately handed out at the time. Tickets for the Banquet will be sold separately to members before the convention.

RIVER BOAT PARTY



The convention hotel is immediately opposite Worcester Cathedral (more on that below), and the River Severn is just behind the Cathedral. It therefore seemed a good idea to make use of the natural advantages available and to hire a boat for a trip along the river. We have arranged for a 150-seat steamer, with licensed bar, to be on hand for a 2-hour trip on the Monday morning after the convention, beginning at 10.30. Most people do not leave a convention hotel until lunch-time in any case, and it seemed to us that this would be an especially pleasant way of ending the occasion.

With good weather (which we can only hope for) I should imagine that the prospect of 150 fans cruising down the river with plenty of best bitter should be one to look forward to!

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL (opposite page picture)

This seems a good time to say a few words about the Cathedral, which is going to be such a feature of this convention (you will see what I mean when you venture into the lounge of the convention hotel). I imagine that a great many of our overseas visitors and members from this country too will want to take a look at this splendid building at some time during the weekend.

The site was originally a Roman fort; then later, a Saxon cathedral until rebuilt by St Wulstan from 1062 onwards. Some portions of this structure still remain, notably the crypt, or range of underground chapels. Much more building and rebuilding was carried out in a variety of styles, but the Cathedral in its present form dates almost completely from work carried out around 1380 by Bishop Henry Wakefield. Among the notable features is the Tomb of King John, the carved figure of the king being the oldest royal effigy in England.

THE CONVENTION HOTEL

Most details of the convention hotel were given in the previous bulletin, but we will repeat some of them here. The convention hotel is the Giffard, in High Street, Worcester. This is a modern six-storey building which will accomodate approximately 145 people, and it has been exclusively reserved for the convention. All bedrooms are completely equipped with telephone,radio, etc, and have their own private bathrooms. A special price has been negotiated, including all service charges and price increases between now and Easter 1971.

Rates for single rooms, with bathroom, will be £4 per person, bed and breakfast, or £5 per person including evening meal. Double and twin-bedded rooms will be £3 per person for bed & breakfast, or £4 per person inc. evening meal. There are a number of twin-bedded rooms and these will be available to those who will consider sharing and thus enjoy a reduced cost.

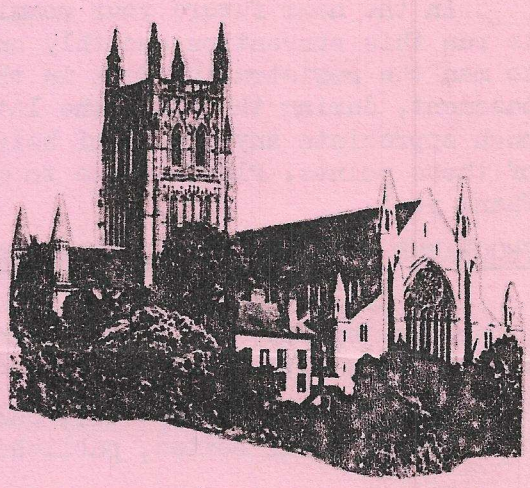
With over 170 members already registered (although of course not all of these will necessarily attend) we feel there may be a shortage of rooms at the Giffard Hotel itself, and obviously it would be best to return booking forms as early as possible. However we have arranged for overspill hotels (there are five others within walking distance) so that accommodation will be available to everyone.

Unfortunately we do have somewhat of a problem as regards couples with children. Due to the physical size of rooms, it is not possible for the Giffard to provide more than one small crib in double-bedded rooms. It may therefore be better in some cases (especially when costs are born in mind) to use the closest overspill hotel, which is quite comfortable and was built in the days before modern architecture. We will certainly make a point of arranging the very best possible accommodation for families attending the convention.

Hotel booking forms will be sent out by the committee later in the year and should be completed and returned to us as soon as possible. Forms will be sent airmail to members in the U.S.A. The hotel will confirm bookings to all visitors, but has been instructed not to accept any bookings except those placed by our committee.

TRAVELLING TO WORCESTER

Worcester is adjacent to the M5-M6 Motorway and is easily accessible by road. From London there is a regular train service at approximately 2-hour intervals during the Bank Holiday. The journey takes about 110 minutes. A bus service runs from Birmingham and takes 40 minutes for the journey.



ART SHOW DETAILS

Bob Rickard will be arranging the convention Art Show and will be writing to British and overseas artists to invite them to take part. Prizes will be awarded for various categories and more details are being prepared by Bob at the present time (address; 19 Charlotte Road, Birmingham 14). Artwork may be offered for sale at the convention and wall space will be provided at no charge. The artists are, however, expected to look after their own property and bidding arrangements, as Eddie Jones does so ably year after year. Artists wishing to place work for sale and not attend the convention may do so by sending material to Bob Rickard who will handle bidding arrangements. A commission of 10% will be levied by the committee in these cases to cover costs of insurance and postage on unsold artwork.

The Ken McIntyre Award will be presented for the first time in 1971, and details of this award and its rules will be announced in the next Report. The organiser of this award is Roger Peyton, to whom donations should be sent.

AUCTION MATERIAL

Any and all auction material will be gratefully accepted. It should be sent to Vernon Brown, Room 623 Pharmacy Dept, University of Aston, Gosta Green, Birmingham. We would particularly appreciate manuscripts, professional artwork, bound books, etc, plus magazines, PBs and fanzines. This year there will be a special 'postal auction', in which a list will be prepared before the convention and circulated to members so that bids may be invited. Material may be entered in this catalogue, and if a reserve price is not reached in bidding either by post or at the convention then it will be returned to the owner. A 10% service fee will again be levied.

BOOKSELLERS

The book-display room will be combined with the Art Show room in 1971, thus ensuring a continual audience. Tables will be available for those who wish to sell books at a charge of £1 per large table, or equivalent space.

COMMEMORATIVE COVERS

As an unusual idea we have decided to investigate whether special commemorative covers can be produced, in limited quantity, for philatelists among our membership. A special G.P.O. Box and frank will be used at the hotel, with an attractively designed and printed envelope. More details will be announced as and when confirmed, but in the meantime further enquiries should be sent to Roger Peyton.

DUTY ROSTER - VOLUNTEERS WANTED

In the near future your committee will be looking for volunteers to help us run this convention smoothly and successfully. We are principally concerned to man the registration desk in the hotel foyer, and the Art-Book room in the basement, during the times the latter is open to the public. We would very much appreciate any offers of help for perhaps an hour's duty at one or other of these points. Please write to me, Peter Weston, if you would like to help. Thank you!

PROGRAMME BOOKLET - ADVERTISING RATES

Our programme booklet will be printed by photo-litho to A5 size (that is, paper size approx 8.2" x 5.8"), and we will welcome advertising material. Our rates are as set out below, and copy deadline is 28th February 1971, to me (PRW).

Full page £1.50 ($4.00), half and quarter pages pro rata.
Professional bodies, publishers etc, double rates.

The observant will have noticed and realised that this will be the first English convention using decimal currency! Copy should be ready for camera and supplied flat, in black ink on white paper, to a size excluding margins of 10½" vertical x 7½" horizontal, and in proportion for smaller sizes.

I don't know who might want to advertise in these progress reports, but at least two more are planned, to the current format, and advertising here is at £1.0.0 per page, £0.50 half page. Black ink on white paper please.

The next WORLD convention will take place in Boston, in August 1971. You may register now to receive literature and vote for the Hugo Awards. Membership is $4.00 for overseas (non-attending) registration, to the Convention Chairman Tony Lewis, Box 547, Cambridge, Mass 02139, USA (NOREASCON).

CONVENTION MEMBERS as of August 22nd, 1970

1. Brian W. Aldiss
2. Gary Kluepfel
3. Bill Burns
4. Andrew Stephenson
5. Dave Kyle
6. Ruth Kyle
7. Norman Shorrock
8. Ina Shorrock
9. Vernon Brown
10. Darroll Pardoe
11 Rosemary Pardoe
12 Peter Roberts
13 Bryan Bird
14 Roger G. Peyton
15 Peter R Weston
16 Eileen Weston
17 Gerald Bishop
18 Roy Kettle
19 Ken Eadie
20 Phil Rogers
21 Bob Rickard
22 Mario Bosnyak
23 Molly Auler
24 Phil Harbottle
25 Pauline Dungate
26 Horst Evermann
27 Jeff Hacker
28 Doreen Parker
29 Roje Gilbert
30 F.J. Steward
31 Arthur Cruttenden
32 John Newman
33 Joan Newman
34 Daphne Sewell
35 Jean Muggoch
36 J. Michael Rosenblum
37 Betty Rosenblum
38 Howard Rosenblum
39 Peter Barrow
40 Diane Barrow
41 Mike Ashley
42 Bob Smith
43 Keith Bridges
44 Jill Bridges
45 Martin Bullen
46 Bob Shaw
47 James White
48 Vic Hallet
49 Kenneth Bulmer
50 Pamela Bulmer
51 Dan Morgan
52 Georgie Morgan
53 Archie Mercer
54 Jill Adams
55 Michael Moorcock
56 Frank Herbert
57 Bob Parkinson
58 Jack Cohen
59 Keith Freeman
60 Wendy Freeman
61 Eddie Jones
62 John Ramsey Campbell
63 Jenny Chandler
64 Steve Moore
65 Donald Wollheim
66 James Blish
67 Judy Blish
68 Bram Stokes
69 Diane Lister
70 Jim Marshall
71 Tony Walsh
72 Christine Priest
73 Eric Briggs
74 Alan Denham
75 Graham Hall
76 Dick Ellingsworth
77 Diane Ellingsworth
78 Ted Tubb
79 Harry Nadler
80 Marie Nadler
81 John Cossato
82 John Brunner
83 Marjorie Brunner
84 George Hay
85 Norman Weedall
86 Ted Ball
87 Mark Adlard
88 Richard Doron
89 Avril Barnes
90 Anthony R. Lewis
91 Susan Lewis
92 Ethel Lindsay
93 Tony Sudbery
94 Waldemar Kumming
95 Graham Boak
96 Harry Hodson
97 Michael Kenward
98 Tim Stannard
99 Alan Donnelly
100 Richard Geis
101 Peter J Wilde
102 Peter Mabey
103 Frank Wyers
104 P.B. Williams
105 Jim Linwood
106 David A Sutton
107 Sandra Sutton
108 Paul Shackley
109 Ian R Williams
110 Stan Nicholls
111 Audrey Walton
112 David Redd
113 Dave Griffiths
114 E.R. James
115 Walter Gillings
116 Charles Winstone
117 David Sellars
118 Phil Spencer
119 Martin Pitt
120 D.A. Austin
121 B.T. Jeeves
122 S. Osborne
123 Adolf Fritsch
124 Gerry Webb
125 Stuart Smith
126 Elsie B Wollheim
127 Rodie Sudbery
128 John Marshall
129 Julia Matheson
130 Anita Crum
131 Roger Waddington
132 Andy Porter
133 Harry Harrison
134 Keith Otter
135 Gerald Taylor
136 Caroline Lightowier
137 C. Southern
138 Graham Howard
139 M. Horrell
140 D.A. Symes
141 Sam J. Lundwall
142 Frank W. Barron
143 Joanna Burger
144 Irene Boothroyd
145 Michael Bickerstaff
146 Lars Olov Strandberg
147 Ivor Latto
148 T.D. Speakman
149 B.R. Edwards
150 Hartley Patterson
151 W.J. Coombe
152 John L. Millard
153 Richard J. Wilkes
154 Edward A Wilson
155 Rosemary Wilson
156 David A Riley.

(Cont/d)

CONVENTION MEMBERS (Continued)

157 Tony Edwards
158 Marjorie Edwards
159 Anne McCaffrey
160 Peter L Dowson
161 Graham Mills
162 Mrs G. Mills
163 A.G. Prior
164 Philip Strick
165 Keith Laumer
166 Malcolm Hall
167 Lancer Books Inc.
168 Robert Hoskins
169 John-Henri Holmberg
170 Sam Long
171 Vincent DiFate
172 David N. Lewis
173 Jack Marsh
174 Linda Garner
175 Alastair B. Noyle

As can be seen from the above list many convention 'regulars' and other interesting people have already registered. In addition, because we have probably received more publicity than most conventions, there are a number of names on this list which I don't recognise - in 1971 there will most likely be quite a number of people present to whom this is their first convention. To these I would like to offer a few comments:

Can I say now that you should enjoy yourselves at Worcester, but of course it is always more pleasant to know some others to talk to. If you don't know anybody, then do please ask; don't be afraid to introduce yourself to anyone, prominent author or the chap in the next seat. I'll personally be delighted to meet fresh faces (although that is if you can catch me - I expect to be running around in ever-decreasing circles and enjoying the experience thoroughly!).

The British Science Fiction Association will be running their Hospitality Room throughout the duration of the convention, and will be glad to see anyone who may be feeling a bit lost. Alternately the Knights of St. Fanthony (please don't ask me to explain that now!) will also be under standing orders to drop everything to make a new visitor feel at home. You can recognise these esteemed gentlemen (and ladies) by their "S.F." badges - but more about that in later bulletins.

Should you receive this Progress Report and have not registered, you can do so now. Registration is 10/- and entitles you to all convention literature including the programme booklet, even if you do not actually attend the convention itself. Cheques, money orders etc. should be made payable to "22nd British S.F. Convention" and sent to the Chairman, address below.

PUBLICITY:

Although as I say we have had good publicity so far, we can certainly use more. Fan-editors and others receiving this Progress Report are encouraged to reprint items and to make comment generally.

EASTERCON 22, the 22nd British Science Fiction Convention, 9-11th April 1971 at the Giffard Hotel, Worcester.

CHAIRMAN: Peter R Weston, 31 Pinewall Avenue, Birmingham 30, U.K.

COMMITTEE: Vernon Brown (Auction material) Room 623, Pharmacy Dept, University of Aston, Gosta Green, Birmingham. Roger G. Peyton, 131 Gillhurst Road, Harborne, Birmingham 16. Bob Rickard (Art Show) 19 Charlotte Road, Birmingham 14.

The convention is held under the auspices of the British Science Fiction Association Limited.